



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

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AG Paxton's Office, Travis County DA Margaret Moore Obtain Conviction, 40-Year Prison Sentence in Sex Trafficking Case Involving a 14-Year-Old Victim

AUSTIN – Resulting from a joint effort by his office, the Travis County District Attorney's office, and the Texas Department of Public Safety, Attorney General Ken Paxton today announced that a Travis County District Court sentenced Kedrick Nelms, 28, to 40 years in prison for sex trafficking a 14-year-old girl. On June 20, a Travis County jury found Nelms guilty of trafficking of persons and of compelling prostitution of a minor, both first-degree felonies. Nelms opted to have the judge determine his punishment.

The attorney general's Human Trafficking and Transnational/Organized Crime section, led by Deputy Criminal Chief Kirsta Melton and Assistant Attorney General Melissa Holman, assisted the prosecution of the case at the invitation of Travis County District Attorney Margaret Moore. They were joined at the trial by Travis County Assistant District Attorney Josh Reno. The Texas Department of Public Safety conducted the investigation that led to the successful prosecution of Nelms.

"As a result of this successful, first-of-its-kind partnership between my office, the Travis County District Attorney's office and the Texas Department of Public Safety, a dangerous and despicable human trafficker has been brought to justice," Attorney General Paxton said. "I'm grateful to the prosecutors and our law enforcement partners for their tireless work on this collaborative effort. My office will continue to work to protect victims from sex trafficking and prosecute those who profit from the exploitation of human beings."

Travis County District Attorney Moore said: "I commend the attorney general and his assistants for this outstanding prosecution. I am proud to have partnered in this exemplary collaboration."

Nelms used a social media app called Tagged to lure his underage victim into a relationship, then introduced her to his girlfriend, Kirsten Violette, who conspired with Nelms to traffick the girl for prostitution in Dallas, Austin and San Antonio in June 2016. It took a jury one hour to return guilty verdicts on both charges against Nelms. Separately, Violette pleaded guilty this week to trafficking of persons and faces a punishment hearing in August.

Attorney General Paxton has made combating human trafficking a top priority. Two years ago, he launched his office's [Human Trafficking and Transnational/Organized Crime](#) section, which prosecutes human traffickers across the state. In April, the section's [prosecution of Backpage.com](#) resulted in the company pleading guilty to human trafficking in Texas and its CEO, Carl Ferrer, pleading guilty to money laundering. The attorney general's office also assisted the U.S. Department of Justice with permanently shutting down the website, which was considered the largest online sex trafficking marketplace in the world.

Earlier this year, Attorney General Paxton unveiled a [powerful training video](#) to teach Texans how to spot and report suspected human trafficking activity. “Be the One in the Fight Against Human Trafficking” is available for viewing online at <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/human-trafficking>.

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